

Let's Get Active!

Planning Effective Communication Strategies

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



Reasons for using trails

The types of trails in Canada are diverse and can include land-based routes or water-based routes. In a previous bulletin, the 2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor asked Canadians (18 years and older) about their use of trails, the frequency of use, and in what season the trail is typically used (Bulletin #10). In addition, the survey also further asked about the primary reason for using the trail. The reasons identified by trail users are summarized in this research bulletin.

Among the 64% of Canadian adults who indicate that they have used trails in the past 12 months, these individuals were also asked why they use trails. Several responses were identified:

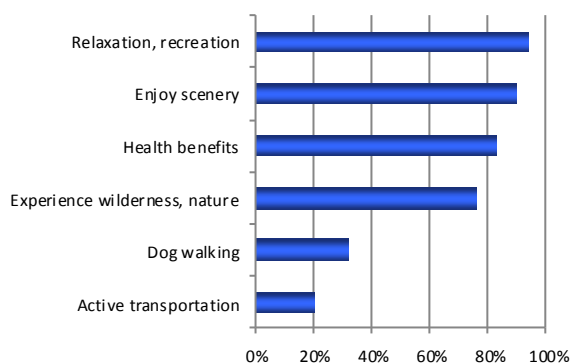
- 94% say relaxation and recreation,
- 90% use trails to enjoy scenery,
- 83% use them for health benefits,
- 76% say to experience wilderness or to appreciate or study nature,
- 32% use them to walk their dog,
- 20% use trails for active transportation,
- 5% volunteered a specific activity,
- 5% mentioned for social reasons,
- 4% offered safety as a reason and to avoid traffic, and
- 2% mentioned access and convenience.

Region—Compared to the national average, adults in:

- the Yukon are more likely to indicate that they use trails for health reasons.
- the Northwest Territories are more likely to indicate that they use trails for active transport, but are less likely to indicate that they use trails for health benefits, relaxation and recreation.

FIGURE 1

Select reasons for using trails, overall



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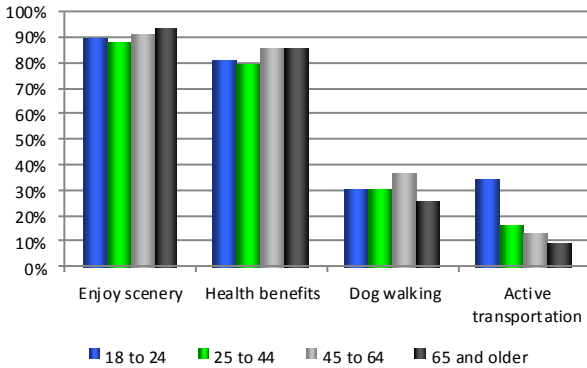
- Quebec are less likely to indicate that they use trails to enjoy scenery or to experience nature and wilderness.
- Prince Edward Island, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories are more likely, whereas those in Quebec are less likely, to indicate that they use trails to walk their dog.

Participant characteristics—A greater proportion of adults aged 45 to 64 say that they use trails to walk their dog compared to older adults, whereas the youngest adults (18 to 24 year olds) are most likely to say that they use the trails for active transport. Relatively more university educated adults say that they use trails for health benefits compared to those who have not graduated from secondary school. Adults who are single (or never married) are more likely than those who are married (or living with a partner) to use trails for active transportation.

A greater proportion of married adults identify a specific physical activity for using trails when compared to those who are widowed, divorced, or separated. Retirees are less likely than the average to use trails for active transport.

FIGURE 2

Select reasons for using trails by age

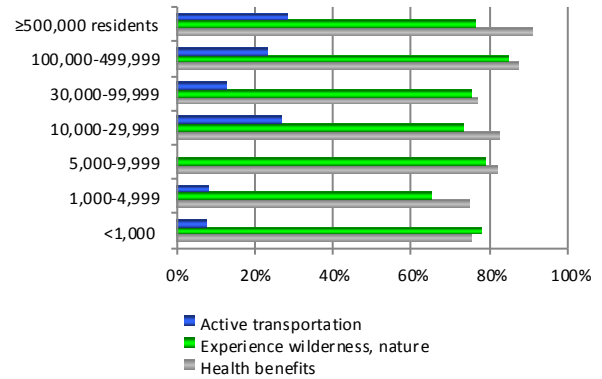


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Household or community characteristics – A greater proportion of adults living in the lowest income households (<\$20,000 per year) indicate that they use trails to enjoy scenery or to appreciate nature or the wilderness compared to those living in the highest income households (≥\$100,000 per year). Residents of the largest communities are more likely to say they use trails for health benefits compared to those in the smallest communities. Similarly, residents of large communities are more likely than *some* smaller communities to indicate that they use trails to enjoy scenery or to appreciate nature and the wilderness. Residents of small communities are least likely to use trails for active transportation.

FIGURE 3

Select reasons for using trails by community size



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CANADIAN FITNESS & LIFESTYLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

201-185 Somerset Street West • Ottawa, ON K2P 0J2 • (613) 233-5528 • info@cflri.ca • http://www.cflri.ca/



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